

## Mariesa Partinico at Pima Community College Pathways to Healthcare Program

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Mariesa Partinico, mother of three, was unemployed for about six months before learning about the Pathways to Healthcare Program at Pima Community College, a Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance. Unemployment Insurance was only temporary and was not nearly enough income to pay the family's bills. Referred to Pathways after seeking assistance from the local One-Stop Career Center, Mariesa was excited about the opportunity to embark on a career in the high-demand medical office field.

With assistance and guidance from Pathways advisors and case managers, Mariesa successfully completed her Medical Records Technician/Professional Medical Coding Specialist training. HPOG funding and a Pell grant covered her tuition and textbook costs and helped with monthly bills and her mortgage.

Prior to completing her training, Mariesa accepted a job offer as a Billing Authorization Clerk. "With the flexibility and support of the instructors, I was able to work my school time around my family needs without the stress of missing a class," Mariesa says. "I actually had four job offers in the field after I accepted the job. Without the HPOG schooling, I wouldn't be in the medical industry, and now that I am, I see a lot of opportunity for growth."

After graduating, Mariesa received a promotion and encouragement to further her education. She has now sought the assistance of HPOG staff in preparing to continue along the career pathway by entering the Health Information Technology Program.

## **Luis at Pima Community College Pathways to Healthcare Program**

After a devastating automobile accident, life changed for Luis Martinez. Injuries made continuing his career in construction impossible. Looking for options other than public benefits to support his family, Luis went to the local Pima County One-Stop Center. There he learned about Pima Community College's Health Professions Opportunity Grant, Pathways to Healthcare Program. A career in healthcare fit with his goals, and Luis made the decision to start on a new pathway in the nursing profession.

After entering the HPOG program, Luis soon learned that his assessment scores were well below the college's requirements to enter the Nursing Assistant (NA) program. Knowing that Luis struggled with a language barrier, his HPOG adviser referred him to a partnering agency, a local literacy program. After one month of hard work, he significantly improved his scores, but they were still not high enough to meet the entrance requirements. In addition to improving his assessment scores, Luis also needed to earn his GED in order to enter the NA program.

Working with the HPOG academic advisers, Luis stayed determined and jumped at the opportunity to participate in the HPOG contextualized College Readiness class. Luis learned that the 10-week College Readiness course is designed specifically to help HPOG participants prepare to enter and successfully complete their chosen healthcare training program. Luis began the class and found that he enjoyed the community atmosphere and also was quickly improving. After successfully completing the 10-week course, he not only scored high enough to enter the NA program, but he also earned his GED!

Participating in the HPOG College Readiness class and receiving HPOG support services allowed Luis to earn his GED and enroll in the NA program. At first, Luis struggled academically in the nursing program. With new-found confidence and communication skills, he met with his nursing instructor to address his challenges. From that moment on, he performed well. Luis successfully completed the NA program and quickly received two job offers. He has since passed the state certification exam to become a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), and his new goal is to continue on the career pathways to become a Practical Nurse.